

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
THE GOOD TOWN  
OF  
EDINBURGH;

From the Year 1583 to the present Year 1763.

WHEREIN

The private Management, as well as the public Transactions of that City are clearly related.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A Proposal for a NEW SET of the Town, and an easy Method of SETTLING MINISTERS within the Borough for the future, so as to prevent Animosities and Heart-burnings among the People.

ALSO

A Method for PAYING the TOWN'S DEBTS, BUILDING BRIDGES and CASTLES, both in the Air and Water, SETTLING a POOR'S RATE, and many other useful Projects, &c. &c. &c.

*When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. PROV. xxix. 2.*

*Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it. JER. v. 1.*

[Price FOUR PENCE.]







## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

**A**S many well-meaning Burgeſſes and Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* have deſired the Publication of this little Treatiſe, it is here offered to the Public *verbatim*, as it was firſt publiſhed in the Year 1700. Several Additions are indeed made; but theſe are thrown, by way of Notes, at the Bottom of the Page.

Who the Author of this Performance was, we cannot ſo much as conjecture: but he evidently appears to have been a plain, well-meaning Man.—As to the Authors of the Notes, (for more than one Hand have been concerned in them), they declare themſelves to be free from Prejudice againſt any particular Perſons now upon the Town-council: Yet, as none of them deſire either Places or Penſions, they may be allowed to ſpeak their Sentiments freely. And although there is a large Field for rallying ſome of the preſent Governors, yet they have avoided all ſuch Occaſions; and only ſuggeſted a few Remarks, as they occurred, on the firſt reading of this Pamphlet, chuſing to leave the Application to the Reader's own Judgment.



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# SOME PRECAUTIONS

T O

All that have any Vote or Influence in electing the Magistrates, Town-council, and Deacons of the City of EDINBURGH.

**H**AVING some time ago accidentally had occasion to see a late printed Letter concerning the Magistracy of the City of *Glasgow*, and the Management of its Common-good; wherein there seems to be a very plain and demonstrative Discovery of several unaccountable Intrigues, through the whole Course of that Affair; ever since that City had the Grant and Power of a free Election of their Magistrates in the Year 1690; I was thereby prompted to make some Inquiry into those Measures that have been taken upon the like Occasions in *Edinburgh*, whose Example (whether good or bad), as being the Metropolis or Head City of the Kingdom, must more naturally diffuse the like Effect through the whole Body of the Royal Boroughs; and ought therefore to be the more carefully looked after; because a Gangrene in the Head brings always a more speedy and certain Ruin, than if it were in some inferior and less noble Part of the Body.

The Magistracy of *Edinburgh*, I find, has, in all Times, been so much courted, and so much Pains have Men taken to thrust themselves into it, that it would seem to carry something more along with it than a bare Title of Honour\*.

There is an excellent Constitution made by way of Decreet-arbitral, pronounced by King *James VI.* and other Judges-arbitrators, in the Year 1583, which not only determines Differences which then were amongst Citizens about the Magistracy, but lays also down a plain and direct Method of Election, determines the Time of the Continuation of the Magistracy and Council, and seems to be so contrived, that at first View one would think it impossible to contrive any thing that might elude the Design, or continue a Party or Faction upon the Council.

Yet this good Constitution did not continue long, when it was manifestly e-

\* The Author has been a wrongheaded Fellow. He begins with insinuating, that Candidates for the Magistracy of *Edinburgh* have a View to Pensions for themselves, Places to their Relations, and such sordid Motives, as well as to those of Ambition. If it was so in these Days, how happy are we whose Affairs are under the Conduct of disinterested public Spirit?



luded by ambitious and ill-designing Men, who even at that Time, when every Article of it was fresh in Memory, the Arbitrators and Umpire, who framed and pronounced it, being still alive. In the Year 1587, *Michael Gilbert*, is a second Year Bailie; whereas the Set is plain, that none should be continued upon the Council above two Years together, except by virtue of his Office: But being two Years Bailie by virtue of his Office, he must be a third Year upon the Council, as old Bailie.

Thereafter, from *Michaelmas* 1587 till *Michaelmas* 1591, *John Arnot* is continued Provost, which is four Years; and after that, from the Year 1592 till the Year 1608, they chose Noblemen and Gentlemen\* to be their Provosts, when *John Arnot*, and afterwards Sir *John Arnot*, gets himself again thrust in, and continues Provost till the 1615, which is seven Years; so that the Affairs of the City were still governed by one Faction or Set of Men; which at length conveyed the Provostship to *David Aikenhead*, who was first chosen Provost in the Year 1619, continued till 1620, was chosen again 1624; in the 1625, he yielded it to Sir *John Arnot*, who was become an old Man; and next Year, 1626, it is again devolved upon *David Aikenhead*, who continues then four Years Provost; and, in the 1630, was thrust out by *Alexander Clark*, who continued four Years; whereby *David Aikenhead's* Patience was so wearied by being so long out of Office†, that he resolves to sacrifice the Town's Liberty and Freedom of Election, rather than be kept any longer out of the Chair. He therefore, at *Michaelmas* 1634, procures a Letter from the King to the then Magistrates and Council of *Edinburgh*, ordaining them to put *David Aikenhead* in the Leet to be Provost, and to put on the Leet to be Bailies, *Alexander Speir*, *Archibald Tod*, *Edward Edgar*, and *Alexander Deniston*, and on the Leets of the Dean of Guild, to put on *John Sinclair*, and on the Treasurer's Leet *David Mackeal*; and his Majesty's Will was, that those Persons should be made choice of, at the Time of Election, to the said Places where they were leeted: Which accordingly was done; and *David Aikenhead* continued till *Michaelmas* 1636, which was three Years. Afterwards it came by turns to several Hands until *Michaelmas* 1650; from which Time there was no Magistracy till *March* 1652, because of the Troubles of the Times, but the Affairs of the Town were governed by a Committee of the Neighbourhood, to the great Satisfaction of the Citizens. In the Years 1653 and 1654, there was no Election, but those who were chosen at *Michaelmas* 1652 were continued without Election, by an Order of the *English* Council of State. At *Michaelmas* 1655, *Andrew Ramsay* was chosen Provost, who continued three Years; at which Time the Council perceiving his grand Design of continuing himself in the Office, and that none were like to be brought upon the Council, but such as should have a Dependence upon him, thought fit to prevent such Practices, by an Act made in *October* 1658, wherein it was enacted, *That, in all Time coming, the Provost, Dean of Guild, and Treasurer of this Burgh, shall not be elected, or continued in*

\* The Noblemen and Gentlemen here meant, are such Persons as did not commonly reside in Town.

† No wonder, as four Years is too long a Period to lie idle.



*their respective Offices longer than one, or, at the most, two Years together at one Time ; and that the Bailies of this Burgh, in all Time hereafter, shall be one Year Bailie, one Year old Bailie, and one Year free of Office, and shall not be put in the Leets to be Bailies until those Years be passed.*

The Council resting secure upon this Act, which they now reckoned a Part of their Constitution, in the Year 1662 do again chuse Sir *Andrew Ramsay* to be Provost ; who, in the Time of his two Years, gets a Council of his own Creatures again \*, and to make all sure, rescinds the Act made in *October 1658*, and continues himself Provost till the 1673d Year of God, which was twelve Years : So that not only the Neighbourhood, but his own Creatures and Council, growing weary of his Government, they raised a Declarator, before the Lords of Session, of the Town's Privileges ; the Event of which Process was, That they decerned, that the said Act 1658 should be revived and further secured, and a considerable Penalty and Oath adjected, to be taken by every Member of the Council upon the Day of Election : And accordingly they made an Act in *March 1673*, ratifying and reviving the Act made in *October 1658*, and rescinding Sir *Andrew's* Act made in *October 1664*, declaring it void and null, and to be prejudicial and derogatory to the Laws and Acts of Parliament, and to the Set and Decreet-arbitral, and to the fundamental Liberty and Privileges of this Burgh ; and ordains the whole Magistrates, Council, and Deacons of Crafts, to take an Oath for the inviolable Observation of the said Act in all Time coming ; and do, by their solemn Oath, *in verbis de presenti*, protest before almighty God, that they shall observe this Act in all the Heads, Clauses, and Articles thereof, inviolably, in all Time coming : Which Oath is administrate every Year before they proceed to the Election ; and how well it has been observed, shall appear by and by.

The Affair of the Election being again brought into its right Channel, it was not long ere those in the Magistracy fell upon new Contrivances and Methods to elude all Laws and Constitutions that were made to prevent continuing of Men and Factions upon the Council ; among many others, there was one which was to secure the Election of the Deacons of Crafts, which is the first Step of the Election, and all the subsequent Steps in electing the Council and Magistrates has a great Dependence upon that. The ancient Custom is, That the Incorporations give in six Persons in their Leets to the Council, who, out of these six chuse three who are returned to the Incorporation, and they out of these three chuse their Deacon. This Custom was founded upon the Set, which says, *That the Council shall call in before them the several Deacons of Crafts, and inquire their Opinion and Judgment of the best and worthiest of their Crafts, and thereafter shall leet three Persons of the most discreet, godly, and qualified Persons of every one of the saids fourteen Crafts.* Notwithstanding of which, the Magistrates, without regarding the Leets of six given in by the Incorporations, ordinarily would give out three which were not in the Incorporation's Leets, and

\* Which Practice has been continued ever since, infomuch that every Art is practised for that Purpose, and we have seen what they call a sure Man on the Council four Years running.



of those three, one should be the Man whom the Provost designed\*; the other two were either Town-pensioners, Officers, or in some of the Hospitals, and sometimes living in the Abbey for Debt; so that the Incorporations were forced to chuse the Provost's Man: But not being able to lie long under this Oppression, they raised a Declarator of that Privilege before the Lords of Session, who determined in their favours in the Year 1683. It was about this Time, that the King, by virtue of his absolute Power, did by his Letter nominate the Provosts of Burghs-royal; and, amongst others, those of *Edinburgh*: So that they needed no Counsellors but such as would comply with the Times; and by such were the Town's Affairs and Common-good managed, till the Year 1689; at which Time the popular Election set Things at right again, by electing Sir *John Hall* and others, who received the Town's Common-good, burdened (as I am credibly informed) with 760,000 *l.* of Debt†. But it is very remarkable, that the Town's Common-good at *Michaelmas* 1677, when Sir *Francis Kinloch* was made Provost, being just four Years after Sir *Andrew Ramsay* went off, was in Debt only 400,000 *l.* or little more; which the said Sir *Francis* caused to be marked in the Council-records, the several principal Sums in one Column, and the Annualrent due upon them in another Column; and made an Act in Council, That, every Year at the Election of the Magistrates, the Town's Debts should be thus recorded, that every Set of Magistrates might see what they had bettered or worsed the Common-good by their Management. But this was too good an Act to be kept in Practice; this might have been a Way to have raised Emulation among the Magistrates, and then the Places had not been worth seeking after; besides, it opens a Window that every sneaking Fellow of a Deacon can look in, and count the Magistrates Mouth-bits. Yet this Debt was not increased for six Years thereafter: For at *Michaelmas* 1683, when Sir *George Drummond* ‡ came to be Provost, it was only 400,000 *l.* in Debt; but in the 1689, when Sir *John Hall* came to be Provost, it is found to be 760,000 *l.*; so that in five or six Years there is contracted of principal Sums 360,000 *l.*

This was the Effect of the Nomination of Provosts by the King, who, doubtless, they thought would support them and their Managements, since they were to sacrifice the Town's Privileges, Common-good, and themselves, Soul and Body, to his Interest, against all Deadly, upon Demand.

Now the Management being put in good Hands by the popular Election, it was next to impossible but the Town must thrive: And, indeed, if they had continued as they began, it was impossible but the Common-good had been in a flou-

\* We have Reason to be thankful this Practice is now abolished; the Trades being allowed to give in a Leet of six, which is shortened by the Council to three; but there is commonly little Choice left to the Corporation: Two of these being such as they cannot well chuse, they are constrained to take the third Man, who is a Creature of the Council's, and for whom some Member or other is to answer, that he will always vote right, being a pliable Man, who will take Advice.

† This mighty Sum of 760,000 *l.* is *Scots* Money; which, our Readers are desired to observe, makes only *L.* 63,333 : 6 : 8 *Sterling*.

‡ We suppose our Author had some Pique at Sir *George*, as he points him out to be the Instrument of burthening the Town with 360,000 *l. Scots*; whereas, perhaps, the Money might have been laid out to great Advantage, either for the Honour or Interest of the Good Town.



rishing Condition by this Time. For the Magistrates and Council finding the Common-good in such a Condition, they resolved to take all the frugal Methods imaginable; and for that End went very little to Taverns, except when the Affairs of the Town absolutely required it, and frequently these little Charges were out of the Magistrates own Pockets \*. But Sir *John Hall*, as he was frugal, so he was both honest to the Town, and abundantly generous when the Town's Affairs called for it: For in four Years after his being chosen Provost first, which was at *Michaelmas* 1693, there was not a Farthing Debt contracted; and if his Advice had been taken, and Things had been managed as he intended, a good Part of the Town's Debt might have been paid by this Time: but as he was an entirely honest Man himself, so he believed every body to be as honest; whereby some cunning Sycophants and self-designing Men got themselves easily thrust in upon his Council, who, by degrees, have brought it so about, that, at *Michaelmas* 1696, the Town's Common-good was indebted upwards of 800,000 *l.* notwithstanding that they had received three Years of the two Pennies upon the Pint of Ale, which was set for about 48,000 *l. per annum*, which is 144,000 *l.*; so that in three Years Time this 144,000 *l.* and 40,000 *l.* of new-contracted Debt is spent, or sunk, which, in all, is 184,000 *l.*

I know to this it will be objected, That these first three Years were given for bygone Annualrents and Expenses in procuring of the Act of Parliament; and that it is well known, that this Act stood them 3000 *l. Sterling* †, which is 36,000 *l.*; and that there were considerable Annualrents owing, when that was procured. But allowing the 36,000 *l.* it is false that there were any Annualrents owing. For Sir *John Hall*, in his Answers to a Libel raised before the Privy Council against him and others, when he was chosen Provost a second Time at *Michaelmas* 1693, does positively affirm, That, since the Revolution, there had been no Money borrowed for Payment of Annualrents; but, on the contrary, some principal Sums had been paid; which, I think, should not have been done, if any Annualrents had been owing; and the ensuing Session of Parliament, which was soon after, granted the two Pennies upon the Pint. But the Seeds of Mismanagement were soon sown in the Council, after Sir *John Hall* demitted his Provostship in the Year 1691: For being succeeded by Sir *Archibald Mure*, a Piece of Policy then took place, which was stolen from the History of Sir *Andrew Ramsay's* Government; and that was, that he should not have wiser Magistrates than himself. And, indeed, it were hard, if not impossible, in *Edinburgh* to find such; but, I am sure, better might have been had at the Time. The first good Thing done by the then Council, was to elect a Treasurer that should be a good easy Man, and would not differ upon small Matters with the Provost, and a Man of Reputation and Con-

\* This Practice of Magistrates contributing out of their own Pockets, was long since drummed out of the City.

† Left our Readers should be astonished at this large Sum of 3000 *l. Sterling*, for the Expense of procuring an Act of Parliament, we must acquaint them, that the Practice was, in those Days, to give Money to the leading Persons in Parliament when any particular Act was wanted; and from an Account we have seen, so much to the Chancellor, &c. we dare say, this Sum was fairly expended by the Town.



science; and that he might not be in a Capacity to use any of the Town's Money upon his own Trade, during his Office, he must be one, that the best of his Trade all his Days has been to sell Two-penny Ale; a good Accountant who kept all his Accounts upon Nick-sticks, and was sure to balance his Accounts with Profit, when they come the length of a Score of Ale. But that the Council might believe him to be an excellent Accountant, he refuses to accept, unless they would ordain the Town's Accounts to be kept after the *Italian* Manner, that the State of their Affairs might be always in View; which accordingly was done, and a Book-keeper chosen. But, behold, when the Books come to be balanced and given in to the Council, there is no Account of Cash kept in these Books, neither a Cash-book; for which the Book-keeper answered, That he was not allowed to keep any such Account by the Treasurer; for he did not tell him when he received any Money, nor when he paid Annualrents, only the Accounts of quarterly Pensioners Salaries, Ministers Stipends, and monthly Incidents were given in, and booked; Annualrents but once in the Year, and this was his Way of it: yet he was a very conscientious Man, for he would trust no Cashier but himself, and would let none of it go to a wrong Use, or if it did by the Council's Order, that he could not help; but be sure it should cost the Knave that was to receive it something. As for example, if an Episcopal Minister had gotten a Precept upon him, he thought such a Misereant would apply this to the Prejudice of the Church, and therefore, before he should have it, a Present must be made of some considerable Piece of Plate or so. Or if a Mason had wrought at any of the Town's public Works, and got an Act for his Account, he thinks it unreasonable this Fellow should have all his own Demands, seeing his Servants loose from their Work at Day-light going in the Winter Time, and yet will have as much Wages as in the Summer: But the Fellow being a rugged, ill-natured Dog, tells him, he has wrought for it with the Sweat of his Brows, and therefore will be paid, or he will know wherefor; but still the Treasurer is not in Cash all the Year over, and therefore he must have Patience; till at length a Friend advises him to make some Present to the Treasurer; and rather than he should be wanting in that Piece of his Duty, which might make him lie out of his Money long enough, gives him a handsome Gun, well mounted, to present the Treasurer with; which no sooner is done, but he is an honest Man, and gets Payment of his Account.

By this and some other such like Machines, there is a Way paved for an excellent Management; so that when Sir *John Hall* comes to the Chair again in the Year 1693, he finds, although there had been yet no Debt contracted, by reason that there were some of the good Managers still upon the Council, all these two Years he was off, who were Checks upon those that might have intended ill Things, yet he was like to find Things in a quite other Posture than he left them: For Sir *Archibald* had, in the two Years of his Office, got a Tack of the foreign Customs and Excise, in name of the Royal Boroughs, at least pretending to have a Commission from them when he bade for it, which made Gentlemen that would have perhaps gone a greater Length lie off, so that he got a good enough Bargain: But the particular Boroughs having given no such Instructions to their Commissioners, refused to hold; so that it fell in Sir *Archibald's* own Hand and his



his Partners. By this means Sir *Archibald* was in a Capacity to oblige his Friends upon the Council, and some of them reaped the Benefit of it. And at the same Time, he gets a Creature of his own to be made a Bailie, when Sir *John* was chosen Provost; an old renegade Journeyman-tailor, who once made a good Trade of soling Hosiery, but at length turned Pedlar, for there are many such Shopkeepers as he, no better; so that he was sure, that although he should not immediately succeed Sir *John*, in case he should outlive his two Years, yet he would have Party enough on the Council to come in if he pleased soon after: And provides at the same Time a good Treasurer, a Man that could cypher well enough, having been some Years a Factor, but of mean Parentage, and far meaner Education, and who in a few Years before, when he began to set up, was not in a Capacity to enter Burghs and Guild-brother both at the same Time.

Yet this honest Treasurer found a Way to purchase a Lairdship in his two Years Treasurership, without wronging the Good Town in a Sixpence; but it was clear enough to the Auditor of his Accounts, that he had in Cash of the Town's Money in his Hands for eighteen Months, at least the sum of 30 or 40,000 *l.* at a Time when Money was a good Trade betwixt this and *London*; and with good Management at such a Time, he was a *Dunce* if he could not make *cent. per cent.* upon it: And this was no Wrong done to the Town; for he paid the Tradesmens Accounts of his Time, many of the Annualrents, and brought his Accounts to a very narrow Balance, and left very few Rests to seek in, and got a good Lairdship to boot; such a Man deserves to live.

Now the poor Town begins to suffer: For such Men being brought into the Council by Sir *Archibald's* politic Management, in order to pave a Way for returning again into the Chair when he should see Occasion, and there being some honest Men upon the Council, who began to discover the Intrigue when it was too late, they raised a Libel before the Lords of Privy Council, complaining of some Irregularities and wrong Steps made in the Election, contrary to the plain Meaning of the Set, which is their fundamental Constitution; and thereupon, after a full hearing of both Parties, the said Lords declared the last Election void and null. Yet having the Treasurer upon their Side, what could they not do? for the Town has always a good Purse upon such Occasions. They procure a Letter from his Majesty to the Lords to reconsider their Sentence, which accordingly was done; and the Election 1693 was sustained. And now, all Things being secure, they by degrees dwindled those Men out of the Council, who they thought would oppose their Designs, and racked their Wits to find out fit Tools to put their Designs in Practice; some new come into the Town, who neither knew nor were known; another whose first Employment was to keep *Cows*, who at length came to the Honour of being a Gentleman's Servant, whose Work was to wipe his Master's Boots and Shoes, and to carry his Cloak; but his Master being a Man of public Employment, he came to be getting now and then half a Merk, or a Merk-piece in Drink-money, whereby he made some small Stock to merchandise with, and has acquired some Riches; and therefore wanted nothing but a little Honour to make him great: Such a Man is fit to be a Bailie in *Edinburgh*, the Metropolitan



litan and Capital City of the Kingdom. And another they bring from the Tanning-trade at the *West-port*; this is a sober well-meaning Man, and fit for a Bailie's Post, because he is a Cousin of Sir *Archibald's*. And by this means Sir *Archibald* secures his Business so, that although Sir *Robert Cheisly* intervenes betwixt Sir *John Hall's* going off in the 1694, and Sir *Archibald's* returning to the Chair in the 1696; yet it was not in Sir *Robert's* Power to hinder his making Way into the Chair again by a fair Vote in Council, although, at the same Time, a certain great Man made no small Interest for *George Home* present Provost; notwithstanding of which Sir *Archibald's* Party carried it \*.

And this Occasion must not be lost, to get, if possible, another Tack of the King's Customs, or some such Thing; for the great Politic now seems to be, to make use of the Magistracy as a Handle to twist themselves into some public Tack or other; for the Management of the Town's Affairs must not take up a Man's whole Time, he has himself and Family to provide for; and a very lucky Occasion offers: The Peace being concluded, the Tack granted about a Year before of the Customs to *George Home* and others, falls by a particular Clause in the Tack; then a Convention of the Boroughs is called, and there it is agitated, that it were the Interest of the Royal Boroughs, to have the Tack in their Hands, upon two Considerations. 1. That when it is either in Collection, or in Tack to any other body, the Merchants, who make up the Body of the Boroughs, are oppressed; but now they would be in a Condition to give Ease to their Neighbours. 2. It might and could hardly fail to be very profitable to the whole Boroughs that would be concerned to hold their Shares, in respect the Boroughs being a whole State of Parliament, it was not to be supposed, that the King would suffer them to be Losers. However, the most Part of the Members did demur upon it, upon several Accounts. Some stuck at this, that they had no Instruction from their Constituents; and this being a Matter of Consequence, they could not meddle with it. Others, that their Borough lay not conveniently, and they had no foreign Trade, so that they could not see through it. Others again, That the Boroughs being a State of Parliament, they did not think it very convenient, that a whole State of Parliament should be concerned in any public Tack; but if any private Man, or particular Burgefs had a mind to it, it was none of the Boroughs Business. However, the most leading Men were taken off by Assurance of beneficial Posts, at the most convenient Parts their Business lay at; only, those that live about *Edinburgh*, should be continued Managers; and if any particular Borough did not incline to hold their Share, when their Commissioners returned, those concerned in the Management were to take it off their Hands, upon their refusing to sign a Formula, which was drawn up for that Purpose. And although it was proposed by several Members, that they should first receive Instructions from their respective Constituents, before they should venture to pass it into an Act, yet the Commissioners for *Edin-*

\* Our Provosts now-a-days are wiser than Sir *Archibald* of old; for instead of getting a Tack of the Revenue, they become Managers thereof, with large Salaries: We may therefore call such Pensioners.



*burgh*, although the Boroughs were sitting in their own Burgh, did not think fit to take the Advice of the Town-council \*, who were their Constituents, in so important an Affair: But the first News they hear of it is, that the Royal Boroughs had passed an Act, that the Customs should be taken upon the public Risk and Credit of the Boroughs.

The Town-council finding, that this would be of dangerous consequence to the Town, in respect, that if there was any Loss, it would light heavy upon the Common-good, and that if there was any Profit, it must be consumed in paying extravagant Salaries, and go into private Mens Pockets; they refuse positively to be concerned, and the rather, because their Commissioners in this Affair had acted without Warrant, having no Instructions from them, and being frequently told, that it was convenient to call the Council before they should do it, yet did not think fit to do so. Sir *Archibald* meeting with this Disappointment in the Council, lays it aside for some Days. But the Lords of the Treasury hearing thereof, they refuse to set the Tack to the Boroughs, unless the Town of *Edinburgh* be concerned, not thinking the Common-goods of those Boroughs that would hold their Shares, Security for such a Tack-duty. Upon which Sir *Archibald* did so manage the Business by Promises of beneficial Places, as that he himself, the Dean of Guild *Haliburton*, and Bailie *Menzies*, who represented the Burgh of *Lochmaben*, should be Managers of the Tack; the Treasurer should be conjunct at *Leith* with Bailie *Menzies*, his Brother-in-law; *George Lawson*, who was then a Counsellor, designed to succeed in the Treasurer's Office to *Samuel Maclellan*, should be Collector at *Edinburgh*; and the Deacon-convener general Surveyor of the Waiters †: And taking Occasion of some of the Members Absence, who, he thought, would most vigorously oppose it, represents to the Council, that their refusing to lend their Credit for the taking of this Tack, was like to disappoint the Royal Boroughs in their Design; and of how dangerous Consequence that might be to the Town, he could not tell; considering, that the Year before, at *Perth*, upon some conceived Prejudice against the Town, they had heightened them from *L. 32 : 8 : 8* in the Tack-roll to *40 l.*; and that still it was in their Power to height them more.

This, and many other such Arguments, were used to the Members, both in private and in public, but yet they demurred; till, at length, the Provost and Bailie

\* Our Author might have been informed, that it is below the Dignity of a Lord Provost to consult with his Council; he is only to make sure of the Convener, and two or three leading Men, give them a Dinner once a-week, at his House, and a Fig for all the rest; they are not in the Plot, and can give no Disturbance.—An Instance of this happened in *April 1760*: The Provost conceives a Scheme to assess the Inhabitants for bringing in a second Pipe of Water; and, without consulting any body, but his Convener, and some of his Minions, applies directly to Parliament for an Act to assess the Inhabitants in a Sum about *10,000 l. Sterling*. By the Diligence, however, of some of the Heritors of *Edinburgh*, this Scheme was happily defeated for the present. But his Lordship thinks these Persons guilty of High Treason against the Town, although they offer to contribute a sufficient Sum for this Purpose, in case the Town's Funds are not sufficient for that End.

† This Practice is continued to this Day: A late Treasurer gets a Place; a public-spirited Convener oversees the Mint; a Dean of Guild must also have a Place, and is appointed Treasurer to an Hospital; an old Bailie oversees the Cess; their Lordships the Provosts taking care, at the same Time, to provide for themselves: And into such happy Hands has our Lot fallen!



*Menzies* condescend, that the Town shall not run the Hazard of Loss; and if they did but lend their Credit in this Affair, they might be Gainers; but that they should be bound to free them of Loss. And accordingly a Paper was drawn up to that Effect, and signed and depositate in the Hands of Bailie *Nairn*; who, for ought I know, has it to this Day, and then the good Town condescends to hold: Yet considerable Attempts have been made since, when they found it like to be a profitable Tack, to get it out of the Town's Hands, as shall be related in its own Place.

The Tack was then granted to the Royal Boroughs, and the Management put in the Hands of Sir *Archibald Mure*, Sir *James Smollet*, Bailie *Menzies*, Dean of Guild *Haliburton*, *Dovehill*, &c.; the Posts at the several Ports distributed amongst the leading Men of the Boroughs; and, if they could not gratify all, new Places and Salaries were invented: And this must be done to secure a Confirmation of the Tack and Managers Profits at the next general Convention at *Aberdeen*; for they knew well, that any Act made by this Convention, must be secured by a Ratification of the annual Convention; and, by this Means, they got their Management secured to them for the whole Years of the Tack, at the said general Convention: And then what Places were to be disposed of, they gratified their Friends and Benefactors with them.

Sir *Archibald's* Time now drawing near that he must resign his Government to a Successor at *Michaelmas* 1698, the grand Design then was, to secure the Succession to some of the Managers of the Tack, that they might have the better Opportunity to make it either their own, or the Town's in case of Profit or Loss.

But what was like to mar all their Project was, that a certain great Man had a Friend to recommend to the Chair, *viz.* *George Home*, who, they were afraid, would be no great Friend to the Business of the Tack, yet could not well refuse that great Man, to put him in the Leet for Provost; and thought they might the easier do it, and with less Hazard, that they knew he had done such another Piece of Service to the Town the preceding Year, when he had the Tack of the Customs, which was this. There arrives in the Road of *Leith* a Ship belonging to *Glasgow* Merchants, loaded with Canary, which he persuades them might be more profitably sold at *Leith* and *Edinburgh* than in *Holland*, whither they were designed; but they being doubtful the Town would not allow them to sell it, seeing they were not Freemen of the Burgh, he assures them, that, for a small Matter to the Poor, they might have the Privilege, by making a Town's Offer; which accordingly they did, and the Town-council gave their ordinary Deliverance upon their Bill, which they use to do in such Cases; which was this: That they allowed them to sell it in Wholesale to the Freemen of *Edinburgh*, not under the Price offered; and in respect, that, upon these Occasions, there is ordinarily half-one *per cent.* to be paid to the Poor for this Privilege, which in so valuable a Cargo would amount to a considerable Sum, the Council therefore modifies the Composition to 15*l.* *Sterling*, and ordains the Dean of Guild to exact no more. But this did not satisfy the Strangers, who, not knowing how Wholesale might be interpreted, would not enter their Wine; but he again assures them, that if the Town-council would not allow it to be understood, that selling of single Casks, great or small, as it came there,



there, was felling in Wholesale, he would procure an Act of the Privy Council explaining the Town-council's Deliverance: And accordingly, without speaking to the Provost, or any other of the Members of the Town-council, he and his Partners went to my Lord Chancellor and other Members of the Privy Council then in Town, and lays the Matter before his Lordship; telling, withal, how prejudicial it would be to his Majesty's Customs if such a Cargo were suffered to be carried to *Holland*. Whereupon the Provost is sent for; and being interrogate what the Town-council of *Edinburgh* did understand by Wholesale? and seeing the Tacksmen of the Customs present, he understood presently the Design, and therefore gave his Answer, That he was but one Member of the Council, and could not presume to give their Answer in any such Matter. But being again asked, what his own Opinion was, or what was ordinarily understood by Merchants by that Word? he told, that for the most part it was thought to be a whole Cargo or Parcel of Goods belonging to one Man, or Company of Merchants in Copartnership; or, at least, one Proprietor's Part of the Cargo, to one Company or one Man. But the Lords thought that too narrow, and were of Opinion, that the felling of Wine in Cask as it came home, yea, though a Quarter-pipe, was Wholesale; and that the felling out in Pints, Mutchkins, &c. was retailing. Upon which the Privy Council meets the next Day, where the Town of *Edinburgh* produce their Rights, and were heard by their Advocates; yet the Lords did allow the felling of this Cargo in Casks, great or small, to be Wholesale, but Prejudice to the Town of *Edinburgh's* Rights; and this should not be a Precedent for the like Cases in Time coming, but for the present Case only. This was an excellent Piece of Service done to the Town by a Burgher, and one that had been some time before aiming at the Provostship: So that Sir *Archibald* thought there was no Hazard in putting him in the Leet, considering how he had recommended himself to the Neighbourhood by this Piece of Service; but was sure to put in two with him of the foresaid Managers of the Tack, to wit, Dean of Guild *Haliburton*, and Bailie *Menzies*. When the Deacons of Crafts, and other Wellwishers to the Town see the Leet, they did not well know at first which Hand to turn them to; for if any of the Managers of the Tack should be chosen, they foresaw the Hazard the Town was like to run; and if they should chuse a Man recommended by a great Man\*, they thought that no better than the King's Nomination by his Letter in the late Government: And what the Consequences of that were, was but fresh in their Memory, knowing very well, that one so recommended must be obsequious to his Creator's Nod; and if once it came in that Channel, it should not be easy to bring it right again.

In the midst of these Difficulties, some of the good Neighbours meet with him to know his Mind in case he should be elected Provost, as to the Business of the Tack, and some other Things which were asked him; to whom he declared with uplifted Hands, that he should never condescend to the Town's quitting their

\* Our Deacons are not now so squeamish, and are led entirely by their Overseers: A Man who reckons himself great, steers them; so that we may say all are governed by this nominal great Man; (for we will allow the Name only to the present Skipper), who seeks out for as many needy Creatures as he possibly can.



Interest in the Tack, nor should do nothing of any great Consequence without the Advice of the wellwishing Neighbours; and that he should do what in him lay to bring some of those honest Men to succeed him, who were turned out of the Council in the 1693 and 1694. This he solemnly promised, I shall not say swore, but I am sure with an uplifted Hand before famous Witnesses; upon which they soon came to a Resolution to chuse him\*.

Now he is fixed in the Chair, and the first Use he makes of his Promotion, is to join with a Part of the old Gentlemen of Sir *Archibald's* Faction, to get in to the Commissariat; so that this Piece of Policy is not like to go down, that the Provost of *Edinburgh* must be in some public Tack or other.

Sir *Archibald* now understands very well how to bait his Hook to catch such a great Fish as this; and therefore understanding that Mr *Macleod* and Mr *David Dalrymple* would be content to sell their Office of Clerkship to the Town, he offers Provost *Home* his Service to get his Son admitted conjunct Clerk with the Lord Advocate's Nephew Mr *Stewart*, providing he would purchase the present Clerks Good-will, being sure to get an Act of Council for his Admission.

This is a considerable Piece of Service, and deserves a very grateful Resentment: The Provost therefore thinks he can do no less, than, at Sir *Archibald's* Desire, to quit the Town's Interest in the Tack, although their Credit be engaged to the Lords of the Treasury for the Tack-duty, and take Sir *Archibald* and others Bond for their Relief. And, after Things are rightly prepared, an extraordinary Council is called for that Effect; but the Business having come abroad amongst the Neighbours, the Counsellors are accosted upon all Hands, and the Trick plainly opened up to them. Sir *Archibald* finding this, offers two or three hundred Guineas to the Poor for the Town's Good-will of it; but 500 were offered by another honest Neighbour not upon the Council. And it was offered by a Gentleman, That if the Town would put their Interest in the Tack to a Roup, he would have given 1000*l. Sterling* before he wanted it, and pay it over the Board. The Council refuses to do it, which did not a little cast down the Provost and Sir *Archibald*; but they would not give such a Blow without giving his Lordship, at the same Time, a Cordial to support his drooping Spirits: So that they make an Act, That if any of their new-chosen Clerks shall chance to die before he has been six Years in Office, he, his Heirs, or Assignees, shall have a just Title to the Emoluments of these six Years.

Now to consider this aright, these Gentlemen have no very ill Bargain of the Clerkship; for, although it cost them about 30,000 Merks†, yet *communibus annis* it is reckoned worth 10,000 Merks: Now, six Years Emoluments secured to

\* Our Author must have been very credulous, to think of binding Politicians with Straws. Had the honest Man been now living, he would find this the daily Practice, and be himself laughed at for a Simpleton.

† The Clerks Fees must not now be so high as they were in our Author's Days. Why we think so, is, that, in the Year 1760, the first Vacancy that was to fall, was, by Act of Council, sold to *G. L.* for 200*l. Sterling*, to be paid on his entering upon Office: This is not 4000 Merks. And we hear the Provost's good Friend *W. A.* is to have the second Vacancy on the same Terms.



them will be 60,000 Merks; so they have of neat Money, to accept of a Place of 10,000 Merks *per annum*, 30,000 Merks; yet this was but a small Affair not worth the taking the Advice of good Friends and Neighbours in.

The Election at *Michaelmas* 1699 draws near: And although there was no Provost to be changed this Year, yet a Council must be had, that may be fit Tools against the next Election, that a good Provost might be secured to succeed himself; and although the ordinary Politics were used at the Election of the Deacons, yet Things there succeeded not as he intended: And, particularly, Mr *Monteith* was chosen to be Deacon of the Surgeons, and Deacon-convener of the Trades, who though one of Sir *Archibald Mure*'s Minions, being the only Man that was most active in bringing him on the Provostship for the second Time, at *Michaelmas* 1696; yet, having some Experience of his Carriage on the Council, when he was formerly Deacon-convener, he was afraid he should be uneasy to him, and thwart some of his Designs, not so much out of Zeal for the Town's Interest, as out of Ill-nature, and the Ill-will he bore his Lordship; and really there may be some Reason to believe it: For if Mr *Monteith*'s Zeal for the Town's Interest had been what he pretended, the Declarator which he raised in Name of the Trades upon Points of Privilege, and some Mismanagements, should have comprehended a certain Act of Council, which might, in Time, have been a greater Bulwark against Faction and Mismanagement, than all these imaginary Privileges, scarcely worth a Farthing, and might have secured against Mismanagement in Time coming: And that is an Act of Council standing in full Force, never yet repealed, nor so much as ever proposed by any Man to be rescinded, although there is not a Member of the Council but knows it, *That no Deacon or Tradesman \* upon the Council, shall be employed in the Town's Work.* This Act the Deacon-convener was not ignorant of, and knew the bad Effects and Consequences of its not being observed; yet would not raise a Declarator upon that: So that most reasonably it may be concluded, that the Declarator raised by him, was not so much out of Zeal for the Town's Interest, as to gratify his own Humour. But whatever were his Motives, the Provost soon found a Way to get him turned out of the Council, by raising a Process against him before the Privy Council, for protesting against the Bailie of the *Canongate*'s being received, after he was, as he thought, illegally elected; so the Privy Council turns him out, and deservedly, for his Indiscretion.

The Neighbours then begin to change their Opinion of their Provost, and think, that if he designed Sir *Archibald Mure* to succeed him, he had not endeavoured to turn out Mr *Monteith*, who was always upon Sir *Archibald*'s Side, but that Bailie *Johnston* is the Man designed; an honest Gentleman of entire Credit and Reputation, extremely well fitted for the Post, and who wants not great Men and good Friends to support him in any Difficulty that may occur during the Time of his Administration, and will be fit for any public Post, Employment, or Tack, that the Provostship can advance him to; and who will not let that Piece of *Edinburgh*

\* This abominable Act, secluding the Council-deacons to work for the Town, has long ago been rescinded.



Policy fall, that their Provost should still be concerned in public Tacks\*. And besides, if what is the ordinary Discourse of the City concerning him may be credited, he has another very good Qualification, wherein our Provosts have been very defective of late, that he is very kind to the female Sex; nay, that we had not such a well-qualified Provost that Way, since King Solomon's Days†.

But as *George Home's* Management of the Town's Affairs has been always attended with a great deal of Foresight, Prudence, Honesty, and Discretion; so he appeared no less vigorous, ready, and resolute in the Town's Preservation, when threatened with a dreadful and universal Conflagration, and that every body thought it should have been in a few Hours reduced to Ashes, which God in his infinite Mercy prevented. And, as a Testimony of his Readiness of Wit and good Intention to preserve the City, he presently sets all the Town's Officers and Servants to Work; but seeing the Fire broke out pretty near his own Lodging, this came very readily in his Mind, *Tum tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet*, and thought it most reasonable to begin at home: And so all Hands are set at work to carry out his Lordship's Furniture, and that of the other Magistrates who lived thereabouts; so that come of the Town what will, they were sure not to lose a Groat's-worth, (unless they were Heritors or Landlords), all being secured in the Council-house, under a Guard, which some People said might have been as well employed elsewhere. But now the Fire was so far advanced towards the *Parliament-cloze*, that there was no stopping of it.

I know his Lordship's Wellwishers will say, That the Tradesmen and others that use to work upon such Occasions, would not appear by reason of the late Disobligement they had met with in turning out their Deacon-convener‡. I cannot say but that might cool the Courage of some silly Men amongst them; but that this was the Reason, I cannot think: For the most Part of the considerable Masters in Town did go and work to the manifest Hazard of their Lives, and carried all their Servants along with them; but when they came to call for Water, behold the Town's Pipes were empty for several Hours, and not one Drop of Water to be had. Besides, I heard one of the ordinary Workmen about the Town say, that he was a Madman that would go and hazard his Life there, when, at the last Occasion of that Nature, although they had wrought well, and mastered the Fire before it did any considerable Damage, yet they were paid at the Rate of fourteen Pence *per* Piece; and the greatest Gratification that was given, was Half a Crown: And who would be such a Fool to hazard his Life against the Flames

\* The Case is now altered; there being no public Tacks of that kind. But then if a Provost can be got, that needs a Place or Pension, or is already in Possession of something in that Way; he must, by all means, have the Preference. This we have seen since the Year 1747, to this Date 1760; only a single Provost that has not been in this Class.

† We chuse to pass over any Remarks on this Passage; although, within these thirty Years, some of their Lordships have been pointed out in this Way; but, we dare say, without the least Foundation.

‡ There seems to be some private History both with regard to the Deacon-convener, and the Provost taking care of his own Property *primo loco*; but as we are unacquainted with it, must pass it over.



for such a Reward, when they were that Night getting Guineas for carrying of Burdens, at Places of the Town where the Flames had not yet come?

But that he might yet signalise himself by some good Action for the good Town before he yield the Chair to a Successor, he thinks there will be nothing more grateful to the Citizens, than to free them from watching and warding; and therefore will have a mercenary Guard levied, which his Predecessor Sir *Archibald*, and the then Council, upon many good and weighty Considerations, thought fit to disband, and ordained the Neighbours to guard the Town themselves, or send out when it fell to their Tour a good and sufficient Man; but he found there would be some Difficulty in it, yet it must be done, because he had a Friend to advance to a Lieutenant's Post\*.

The first Thing to be done is, to make the Watching uneasy to the Neighbours†; and therefore, first, the Town-captains are made believe, that it is dishonourable for them to have any other upon the Guard with them but Masters of Families; and therefore will not accept of Servants or hired Men upon the Guard; and if any Burgher commit such a Mistake as not to come out himself, then his House is poynded till he pay his Fine: So that the Magistrates and Council are made uneasy with Complaints and Petitions, and the Hue and Cry is raised for a Guard of standing Soldiers. But, notwithstanding of all this, the Deacons of the Incorporations did not think fit to adventure upon such a Business, without taking the Advice of the several Incorporations, and therefore called their Houses, and laid the Business plainly before them, (which, it is to be wished, were practised more frequently, and then it might go better with the Town's Affairs); but the Incorporations declare unanimously against a Guard; which determined the Deacons. And when my Lord Provost proposed the Affair in Council, he finds that it would not do, and therefore lays it aside for that Time. But what he could not get effectuated with the Town-council, he resolves to have done another Way; and a very fit Opportunity falls in his Way for establishing a mercenary standing Guard in the Town, which he must embrace to effectuate his Design, although with the Surrender of the Town's most ancient, if not only now remaining Privilege. The Matter in short is this.

The Directors of the *African and Indian Company* receive Advice of the Defeat of the *Spaniards* in the *West Indies* by a Party of their Colony of *Caledonia*, for which all the Welwishers to that Affair were to put out Illuminations as a Testimony of their public Joy. This the Lord Provost is advertised of, that his Lordship might fall upon Methods to prevent Abuses which are ordinarily committed upon such Occasions, by breaking of Glass Windows; his Lordship was likewise, it seems, advised by some of the Neighbours and Members of the

\* Within these few Years we have had a Provost of the same Mind, who wanted to go off with *eclat*; therefore he proposed, as a Remembrance of him, to assess the Inhabitants pretty smartly, by Act of Parliament, for their Water, giving out boldly that there were no Funds in the Town's Hands; whereas, upon Inquiry, they appear to have upwards of twenty thousand Pounds *Sterling*, at this Date, *September 1760*.

† This is followed out also on the Water-plan. By allowing the Pipes to run into Disrepair, and giving away many private Pipes, a Scarcity is contrived, and this must be the lucky Time for the Scheme's taking place.



Council, that in this Case a Rabble was to be feared, and therefore timely Methods should be taken to prevent it. He was indeed pleased to tell the Town's Captain upon the Guard, that he had heard there was a Rabble designed; and that therefore they should take Notice of their Guard: But sure his Lordship knew very well, that a Company or two of Men could not be able to suppress it; why might not he had the sixteen Companies of Train-bands upon such an Occasion? who were in a Capacity to have made a Line from one End of the Town to the other, and always upon the first Appearance of a Croud could have suppressed them; and to be sure no Apprentice nor Servant durst venture to appear, where he knew his Master was in Arms: But it seems he had no Mind to prevent it, but suffers Persons of Honour and Quality to be inhumanely and barbarously insulted by a base Rabble, the King's Prison broke open, and Prisoners of all Sorts for the basest of Crimes condemned justly to die, to be set at Liberty; while his Lordship with the rest of the Magistrates sit all the Night in a Tavern as idle Spectators, to say no worse of it.

The Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council taking this Affair into their serious Consideration, find they cannot be secure of their Lives in *Edinburgh* if this be suffered; they therefore acquaint the Provost, that the King's Forces must be brought into the Town to keep Guards, one at the Netherbow Port, which must be from thenceforward kept open; another in the Town-council-house, to guard the Parliament-house; and a third at the Weigh-house, to keep a Communication with the Castle. But his Lordship thought not fit to acquaint the Town-council with this till the Forces were within the Town, and had possessed themselves of the Netherbow Port, that Methods might have been fallen upon to satisfy the Privy Council, that the Town should both sufficiently guard themselves, and secure their Lordships, and preserve their own Privileges. But the King's Forces being once got in, they must not go out again till the Town levy a Guard. Which accordingly is done, though the Town be not as yet freed of Forces; but his Lordship has got his Design *viis et modis* by it.

By what is said it may appear to the World, how well he has kept the first two Parts of his solemn Promise to those that were the chief Instruments of his Promotion. There remains only a third Part of his Promise, which is the last Act of his Government, the chusing of his Successor; which, I doubt not, he will perform as well as he did the first two, and then he comes off in Coach.

But before he go off the Stage, let us compare his Reign with those of his Predecessors! Sir *John Arnot* is the first we find who endeavoured to subvert this Constitution of the Town, *That no Man should be on the Council above two Years together, except by virtue of his Office he continue upon it*; which is, when a Man has been two Years Provost, by virtue of his Office, he continues on the Council a third Year as old Provost, and then he must go off of Course: But Sir *John* violated that Part of the Set, being first four Years successively Provost, and afterwards seven Years. Now, that *George Home* has been guilty of the same, we need but out of severals give you this one Example, that Sir *Archibald Mure* having been two Years Provost, was one Year old Provost by virtue of his Office, and,



and, conform to the Set, ought to have been then out of the Council; but the Provost makes Interest with the Members, and elects him a fourth Year upon the Council; and, as some People are pleased to say, with Design to continue him yet longer by making him his Successor. Now, at this Rate, although the Set says plainly, that none shall be on the Council above two Years together, except they be Office-men or by virtue of their Offices, which I am sure Sir *Archibald* was not this last Year; yet a Man may be perpetuated upon the Council by this Method till the Day of his Death: But the best of Men change their Opinion; for it is not many Years since his Lordship entered his Protestation against such an Election.

*David Aikenhead*, afterwards in the Year 1634, to turn out another Man and get himself into the Chair for the second Time, betrays the Town's Liberty and Freedom of Election, by procuring a Letter from the King, ordaining himself to be chosen; but what Difference is there betwixt the King's Command and a great Man's Influence in such an Affair, when he shall please to make it his Business? I think I need say but little to make it appear, that they are both alike pernicious to the Town's Interest, and every body knows by what means *George Home* came to his Provostship. These Methods do as much infringe the Town's Freedom of Election as the King's Nomination.

Sir *Andrew Ramsay*, although he did violate and infringe the Set to keep himself in Place, yet was a Man that understood himself to be the King's Lieutenant within the Burgh, and did always maintain its ancient Privileges against standing Forces. One Example I shall only offer of his Zeal that Way: An Officer of the King's Forces being to march his Company from the *Canongate* to the *Westport*, not knowing the Town's Privilege, marched his Company by the nearest Way through the Town; but Sir *Andrew* being accidentally upon the Street, commanded the Officer to march down the first Wynd to the *Cowgate*, and there with their clubbed Muskets, without Beat of Drum, to march to the *Westport*; which, accordingly, the Officer found it his Interest to do.

I confess, in Time of War, this Privilege is not so much regarded; there being a Necessity to look over it at such Times as the King shall have Occasion, the Castle being the great Magazine of the Nation.

I shall make no Comparison betwixt the present Management and Sir *Andrew's*; every body that can see but an Inch before his Nose, I think, will be capable to discern it.

As for the Management of the Town's Affairs, in the late Government, when the Provosts were nominated by the King's Letters, and that in five or six Years Time there was contracted of Debt 360,000 *l.*; if we shall compare these four last Years, wherein Sir *Archibald Mure* and *George Home* have had the Administration of the Town's Common-good, I am afraid, although this cannot be discovered till these Accounts be audited, that it shall be found their Management has been little better. For, at *Martinmas* 1686, the Debt was upwards of 800,000 *l.* as I said before; and now they have four Years of the two Pennies upon the Pint of Ale, which, at 48,000 *l. per annum*, amounts to 192,000 *l.*\* Now, if the Town's Debts be reduced to 608,000 *l.* the Management is good. But if otherwise, there

\* By a Pamphlet, just published, we see the Ale-duty has from July 1. 1723 to July 1. 1759, produced 192,500 *l. Sterling*; that is, at an average, 5338 *l. Sterling* yearly. — That no more of the 192,500 *l.* has been expended on public Works than 34,952 *l.* — Consequently there has been eaten up by Interest on Monies borrowed, annual Burthens, Salaries, Charges of Management, and Incidents, 157,548 *l. Sterling*.



must be so much Money spent or sunk unwarrantably, the Town being obliged by the Act of Parliament granting the two Pennies upon the Pint, to contract no more Debt, but to retire Bonds to the Value of what it is set for yearly; and that this might be done the more effectually, there is a Nomination of some of the Lords of Session and some other Gentlemen in the Act of Parliament, who are impowered to call the Town to an Account and see the State of their Debt, and that the Produce of the two Pennies upon the Pint be rightly applied.

But although we cannot come to an exact Knowledge of this Affair before these Treasurers Accounts be audited, yet there are very shrewd Presumptions, that it is not altogether applied in the Terms of the Act of Parliament. For, at the granting of this Act, Sir *John Hall* did offer to the Town-council, that if they would assign him to the two Pennies upon the Pint of Ale for fifteen Years, for which it was first granted, and to the rest of their Common-good, he should find the Town Security, beyond Exception, to pay all the Ministers Stipends; maintain all their Fabrics and public Works; pay all their Salaries and Pensions, not exceeding the Sum they then extended to; and give to the Town-council 10,000 *l. per annum* to defray the common Incidents of the Town; and, at the End of fifteen Years, should deliver them the Common-good free of Debt.

But this Proposal did not relish, although he offered Land-security, beyond Exception, for the Performance of it: And now, though there be seven Years of the fifteen past, I doubt whether the Town be in less Debt than when the Act of Parliament was obtained. To prove which, I shall give the following Instance.

The *Society*, which was a considerable Branch of the Common-good, was sold for a considerable Sum, which was thought might have relieved the Town of so much Debt; but it is known to the Auditors of Treasurer *Maclellan's* Accounts, that the most Part of it was employed in Payment of Annualrents, which is equivalent to the contracting of so much Debt: And if they cannot pay principal Sums by selling such considerable Parts of the Revenue, it is to be feared, that the two Pennies upon the Pint will be the same Way applied.

May it not then be thought worthy the Consideration of his Majesty's High Commissioner, and the Right Honourable Estates of Parliament, how far the Magistrates of *Edinburgh* have applied the several Gifts obtained from the King and Parliament, to the Ends for which they were granted; and that these Gifts might be called for, and the several Magistrates that have had the Management thereof, made accountable therefor.

There is another Thing that renders it very suspected, that the Town's Circumstances are not on the mending Hand: For although this be the last Year of this Treasurer's Office, yet when he, for several Council-days successively, was desired to give in an Account of what principal Sums the Town was owing, with what Annualrents were yet resting upon the several principal Sums; after many Delays, he; at length, positively declared, that he did not know the Town's Debt.

This is a well-qualified Treasurer, who, the Year before he was elected Treasurer, being leeted to be a Bailie, did make all the Interest he possibly could, both by himself and Friends, not to be elected Bailie, declaring unto them, that he did not think himself qualified for such a Post; but he improves well in one Year, to be at the next *Michaelmas* sufficiently qualified to be Treasurer.

And lately, when he brought in some Months incident Charges, with a Committee's Report upon them, to be approved by the Council, after reading of the Committee's Report, it was objected by some of the Deacons, that they could not blindly approve of such Accounts, upon the reading a bare Report, without know-  
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ing so much as one Tittle or Article of the Accounts; but desired they might lie upon the Table till the next Council-day, that they might have Access to peruse them, and that then they would be ripe to give the Vote of their Conscience\*. But this was refused; whereupon they offered to protest: But the Provost had no mind to have such a Protestation recorded, and therefore delays the approving of them for that Day, and appoints an Hour in the Council-chamber, where the Treasurer was to attend them with his Accounts, and make them patent. And accordingly some of the Deacons, and other Counsellors did attend, and began to go through the Accounts, and were making some Observes upon a Paper apart, as they went through the Articles: But my Lord Provost coming in, and seeing one of the Merchant-counsellors there, said, That he did not take him to be a Deacon, and did not understand how he should come there to make Observes upon the Treasurer's Accounts; that if he had attended the Committee, he might there have had all Satisfaction; but that this Appointment was for the Satisfaction of the Deacons, and not of him. To which he very discreetly replied, That he was not in Town when the Committee sat upon these Accounts, and that he thought, as a Counsellor, he ought to satisfy himself as well as the Deacons, being to have a Vote in approving them as well as they. Upon which the Provost commanded both him and the Deacons to give him up the Observes they had made, saying, That he knew no other Design they had, but to propal the Treasurer's Accounts, and make them the common Talk of the Street.

If I should recount all the little Intrigues of managing the Affairs of *Edinburgh*, this would swell into a great Volume. I have only here mentioned a few, to undeceive some of the well-meaning Citizens, who, I know, are imposed upon, and made believe, that Things are managed in a quite other Manner. And indeed it is no Wonder the Neighbours be imposed upon, when even the Members of the College of Justice are blindfolded in a Matter that very nearly concerns them; and that is, in imposing the Watch-money with the King's Cels†: And although the Committee appointed by the Faculty of Advocates, to sit with the Stentmasters, and see that they should not be wronged, were not ignorant of the Intrigue of that Affair; yet they did not think it worth while to pry into it: *Sed qui sibi nequam cui bonus?* These are fit Men to be trusted with other Mens Business!

Now, since we see plainly into what a low Condition the Common-good and Affairs of the Town are brought by Men who design more their own private Interest than the Good of the Town, and who, for that End, endeavoured by Faction to get themselves, or their Agents perpetuated in the Management thereof; it is then an incumbent Duty upon every good Citizen to contribute all that lies in his Power to get such Men upon the Magistracy and Council, as may manage their Affairs without Self-designs, Men of public Spirits; I do not mean Men that desire to be concerned in public Tacks, thereby to enrich themselves at the Town's

\* The Deacons are kept in better Order now-a-days: And to cut them and all troublesome Persons short, the Treasurer's Accounts are audited by some Burghers named for that Purpose, who meet in a Tavern; and after a hearty Glass, the State of Accounts is produced, which the Provost assures them is right, and then they attest them without more ado; and he would be called a turbulent Fellow, who would doubt the Provost's Veracity in a Matter of this kind.

† Upon a late Inquiry, there appears to be one sixth Part more Cels levied, than is imposed by Law; and this Overplus is in name of Firemen, repairing Pipes and Buckets, Overseeing, Management, &c. Besides, the Act for the two Pennies on the Pint of Ale burthens that Duty with 500*l.* per annum, to make good any Deficiency in the Cels, by such Persons as are unable to pay. But not a Fraction of it is applied for that Purpose; those poor Persons are indeed excused, (as they ought), and the whole Cels, with a sixth Part more, is levied from such as are able to pay.



Charges; but such as are willing and able to lay aside their own private Affairs for a Time, and will make Conscience to improve that Time for the retrieving of the Town's public Revenue, now in a sinking Condition; Men fearing God, eschewing Evil, Encouragers of Virtue, and Haters of Vice; not Time-servers, nor Respecters of Persons, but Lovers of their Country, and known Wellwishers to the common Interest of this City. These are such as those who have a Vote in the Election of Magistrates ought to have in View, as they would not bring a Curse upon themselves and their Posterity; and particularly the Deacons of the Incorporations, they ought to consider, that it is not so much their own Vote they give, as the Vote of the Body they represent; and every particular Member of an Incorporation ought to make it his Business to be represented by such a Deacon, as will, without Feud or Favour, concur with his Brethren in the electing such Magistrates as are here described: And if a Deacon should be observed to be guilty of the Breach of so great a Trust committed to him, it is the Duty of his Incorporation, at least, to provide a better Man when they have occasion to elect again.

There is one Thing worth the Consideration of the Incorporations, which I think might not only be of Use to them, but to the whole City; and, as I hinted before, might very much prevent the Continuation of one Set of Men upon the Magistracy\*. And that is, that since there is a standing Act of Council, *That no Deacon or Tradesman upon the Council should be employed in the Town's Work*; they fall upon such Methods as may oblige their Deacons not to accept of the Town's Employment so long as they are in Office, the Effects of which are but too well known.

I shall conclude with this, that, as I have no other Design in this Paper, but the Good and Welfare of the Town, so I hope no good Citizen will take in ill Part. If any body be offended, and think that some Things are here divulged that might have been concealed; I answer, that it is the concealing of such Faults as are here pointed at, that has been the Ruin of this City, and, I hope, that may satisfy them. I know others will be highly offended, because their Characters are put in Print. To such I answer, that if such Sort of gentle Correction can bring them to their Duty to the good Town, I have gained my Design; if otherwise, and that they still persist in the old Road, I may possibly compliment them the next Year with a new Book, intitled, *The Lives of the Worthies of Edinburgh*.

\* We would propose to the Burgeses and Inhabitants, to apply to the King and Council, or the Parliament, for a new Set of the Town. There are now many of the wealthiest Burghers excluded from any Share of the Management, whereas every one of the fourteen Incorporations send a Representative to sit in Council. And although we will always pay due Regard to the Trades, yet why should not the Merchant-company have a Right to send some of their Number, chosen by themselves, to sit in Council; and why should not the other Burghers, who are neither Tradesmen, nor of the Merchant-company, petition to have themselves formed into a Company? If such a Company be ever incorporated, they should have a Right of chusing some of their Number to sit in Council. Every body knows, that the Merchant-company, and the new-projected Company, which we shall call the **TRADING-COMPANY**, have each of them more Substance than all the fourteen Incorporations put together. Now, why should these Burghers be excluded from the Management, when they are so deeply interested in the Welfare of the Town?—Upon the whole, we think it highly interesting to the Community, that some well-projected Plan was formed, and proper Application made to alter our present Set, pointing out the Conveniencies of the new, and the Faults of the old Constitution. And that some Gentlemen well versed in these Matters would immediately set about so good a Work, is the earnest Wish of their most humble Servants.

EDINBURGH, September 11. 1760.

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